

CBS FACE THE NATION

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HERMAN: Mr. Burt, you are assistant secretary for European affairs, which includes the Soviet Union. What kind of a reasoned, restrained, and yet forceful response to the shooting down of the Korean airliner can we do which may impress the Russians and will have the support of our allies in Europe? BURT: Mr. Herman, let me say, first of all, that the president, as you know, met with the National Security Council on Friday night. We are now consulting very closely with our NATO allies, our friends and allies in Asia. Right now the president is meeting with the congressional leadership. He has been given a set of recommendations. He is studying those recommendations. We think we have a policy firmly in place that is designed to curb Soviet aggression. We are looking at further steps, and the president will be announcing them in the near future. I don't want to go into specifics now because this is not simply a U.S.-Soviet problem. Any measures that the president announces will be designed to win broad based international support, because this is not the United States versus the Soviet Union. It is the Soviet Union versus the world.

From CBS News, Washington, a spontaneous and unrehearsed news interview on Face the Nation with the Assistant Secretary of State for European Affairs Richard Burt. Secretary Burt will be interviewed by CBS News diplomatic correspondent Bob Schieffer, by the New York Times diplomatic correspondent Bernard Gwertzman, and by the moderator, CBS News correspondent George Herman. Our previously announced guest Secretary of Labor Raymond Donovan will not appear on this broadcast. This change of guests was made by CBS News after the shooting down of the Korean airlines jetliner. Face the Nation is produced by CBS News, which is solely responsible for the selection of today's guest and panel.

HERMAN: Secretary Burt, as you pointed out in your first answer, this is not a bilateral problem between the United States and the Soviet Union. The plane was Korean. There were people of all nationalities on board. Who should take the leadership in this? Should this be an American leadership leading the free world in its protest against this killing of so many innocent civilians? BURT: Well, on this issue I think there's a lot of room for leadership by a number of nations. The Koreans, of course, were particularly affected by this action, and they will have a lot to say and do on this issue. The Japanese are very concerned, and they are taking a lead, for example, with us and the Koreans in the emergency U.N. Security Council debate, which is now under way. There is an important American element. A number of Americans were killed, including the U.S. congressman. The aircraft took off from New York, and it was an American aircraft. But the fact is... HERMAN: American-made. BURT: American-made aircraft. But the fact is this really is an international problem. Because what the Soviets have done is violated an international law, and they have undercut, I think, the international norms of civility and safety. And so the, it's important that no one country takes the lead, but the international community as a whole speaks out in unison.

GWERTZMAN: Mr. Burt, there's a lot of questions as to what actually happened. Some people can't believe the Korean airliner could have gone so far off course for so long. Do you have any information at all on what happened? And secondly, is there any reason at all to believe the Soviet charge or suggestion that the Korean plane had some kind of espionage intent, either for the United States or for Korea? BURT: Well, on your first question, we haven't answered all of the questions ourselves. We

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don't have a great deal of information on precisely why the Korean airliner strayed off course. But we do believe that the pilot of that aircraft thought he was on course when he entered Soviet air space. On your second question, I think the answer is a flat no. There is simply nothing that leads us to believe that the Soviets could have concluded that that was a spy aircraft. In fact, the Soviet statements over the last few days have suggested that that aircraft was running without lights. That is flatly wrong. We have information which tells us that the pilot of the Soviet interceptor saw navigation lights onboard that aircraft, including a flashing strobe light. So we're convinced that that aircraft was a commercial airline and there was a very good chance that the Soviet Union fully understood that when they shot at it and destroyed it.

SCHIEFFER: Do they, does the government know at this point what level of the Soviet chain of command the order was given to fire on this plane? BURT: We don't know exactly what level the order was given, but we do know that the Soviet Union has a very centralized command and control structure, that local commanders very rarely take the initiative on such an important decision as shooting down an aircraft.

SCHIEFFER: Well, at this point does it look like the order came from, say, higher than a regional commander? BURT: We're just not able to say precisely.

SCHEIFFER: May I ask just one other technical question? When this first happened, the Pentagon put out reports or told some of the families.... I think Congressman McDonald's family was told that the plane had landed safely. On what was that based?

BURT: I just don't know. I think the assumption might have been that the Soviet Union would have carried out what its normal procedures in past circumstances have been, and that is to force the aircraft to the ground. I think no one could believe for a second that that aircraft would have been shot down. HERMAN: This is the first time that I have heard anybody say that we know or have evidence that the Soviet pilot saw strobe lights. Do we have anything on these mysterious stories that the pilot of the Korean airline plane flight 7 sent some confused signals that indicated that he had been signaled or circled by the Soviet pilot and knew something was afoot? BURT: We have no evidence that he knew something was afoot.

HERMAN: He did not report seeing Soviet pilots, to the best of our knowledge? BURT: I'm not aware of any such reports.

GWERTZMAN: In the transmission from the Soviet pilot, did he suggest to the ground controller that he thought he was tracking a spy plane? Did he say it was a commercial airliner, or what kind of identification... BURT: He referred only to a target, and he was being vectored by the Soviet ground controllers to this target. He was clearly on a military mission, and all he is interested in was destroying that target.

HERMAN: You know, a lot of these questions would be ended if we could all see, and published, the text of the communications between the pilots as they were apparently monitored by the Japanese. Is that coming? Will we ever see those texts? BURT: We and the Japanese have already released an unusual amount of information, and I think we will continue to release information when we think it's appropriate.

HERMAN: Texts? BURT: When we think it's appropriate, we will release more information.

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SCHIEFFER: There have been several stories in the last couple of days quoting intelligence officials, some saying that the, that the Soviets may have indeed thought that they, they were on the track of a spy plane. But I take it you say they saw strobe lights. What's your view on that? Do you think that this is a case of mistaken identity? BURT: Not at all. I think it's preposterous to think that the Soviets concluded that was a spy plane. We carry out normal military reconnaissance missions in international air space in that area and other areas, just as do the Soviets in other countries. These operations are sometimes connected with what we call national technical means of verification. The United States and Soviet Union have agreed on procedures for monitoring arms control agreements. But the point is that, is that we do not violate Soviet air space in such operations. And I'll remind you that we know the Soviets tracked this aircraft for two-and-a-half hours as it went in and out of Soviet air space, and before destroying the aircraft, the Soviet pilot established visual contact with the aircraft. So it just doesn't wash that this was or could have been seen by the Soviets as a spy plane or a military aircraft.

SHIEFFER: Did, did the Soviet aircraft show up on the, on the Japanese monitors? Were they aware that the plane was being tracked by these planes? And if so, why was no warning given either to the plane, or why did the plane not seem to know they were there? BURT: I don't know if the Soviet aircraft showed up on Japanese or any other monitor immediately. I know that following the incident, people looking at the available information recognized from different sources that Soviet aircraft were in the air. But I don't think we had any immediate indication that that aircraft was under attack.

GWERTZMAN: Mr. Burt, could you project a bit? What does this do to Soviet-American relations? Is it still possible to do business with them? Can we get arms control agreements? What about cultural exchange talks? BURT: Well, I think it's clear that an episode like this has to cast a shadow over the relationship, but it does not mean that our approach, our fundamental approach, policy to the Soviet Union will change. We have in place a very firm, a very tough, and a very realistic policy towards the Soviet Union. It's not as though the Reagan administration's policy towards the Soviets prior to this incident was business as usual. It's just the opposite. We have a policy built on maintaining the military balance, on increasing our strength; a policy based on realism, a recognition that the Soviet Union uses force worldwide, and also a willingness to negotiate. So we will continue to negotiate arms control agreements, because we think they can strengthen our international, our national security if they can be verified and if they provide for, at a minimum, equality.

HERMAN: Mr. Burt, you're the expert, or at least the expert we have here on the Soviet Union. Do they know they've been hurt? BURT: Well, we have no evidence that they know they've been hurt, but their statements are very interesting in that, on the one hand, they continue to evade responsibility for this action, but on the other, implicit in their statements is the recognition that they indeed shot the aircraft down.

HERMAN: But they, they know what's going on in foreign capitals; they're getting all these telegrams; their ambassadors are being called in. Wouldn't you think they have some appreciation of what damage, propaganda damage, or whatever you want to call it, has been done to their image in the world? BURT: I would hope that they would. But on the other hand, one of the very disturbing qualities of the Soviet leadership is that they seem unconcerned about world politicking.

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HERMAN: If they wanted to reverse the damage that has been done, what is the least they could do? What action could they take? What first step would they take that might counter some of the damage that's been done to them? BURT: Well, I think there are several things they can do. First of all, they could come clean, and give us the facts, and explain precisely what happened, and if people are to blame, those people should be punished. Secondly, they owe the world an apology. Thirdly, people have been killed, and I think claims, reparations that I think must be paid to the sufferers, family and others. And finally, we have, we have yet to establish the crash site. We have not recovered the aircraft, more importantly the bodies, and they could help us in this instance.

HERMAN: Were there bodies recovered? BURT: No. We have no evidence to suggest that the Soviets have recovered any bodies.

SCHIEFFER: Secretary of State Schultz is going to Madrid next week and he's going to be meeting with Mr. Gromyko, and the State Department was putting out the story yesterday that he will demand some straight answers from Mr. Gromyko. BURT: That's right.

SCHIEFFER: What if he doesn't get the straight answers? BURT: Well, first of all, we think that we must talk to the Soviet Union at a very level so that Mr. Gromyko and his colleagues, the Soviet Politburo understand how important an issue this is. If we do not get straight answers, then we will continue to consult with our allies and take appropriate actions to demonstrate to the Soviet Union how serious an episode this is.

SCHIEFFER: Well, what is this meeting going to be about? I mean, the Secretary would raise that question first, I would assume, and then what happens after that? BURT: Well, I don't want to go into detail about the meeting. It's a confidential meeting, and to be effective I don't think it's appropriate to talk about it in public. But I think it's clear that the secretary of state has some things on his mind, this issue and other concerns we have about the Soviet Union.

HERMAN: You know, a moment ago you were talking about evidence that the Soviet pilot saw the navigation lights and the flashing strobe light. That shows it was, should have shown any pilot that it was a civilian plane, a jetliner. Why do you suppose, what is your theory, or the State Department's theory? What happened? Why did the Russians shot, shoot it down? Is that a policy decision? Is it something that was happened, that happened by mistake, by miscalculation, as so often happens in these cases? What do you think happened? BURT: Well, the Soviets don't seem very concerned about the fact that under international law under no circumstances does any country have the right to shoot down an unarmed civilian airliner over its own skies, because this was not the first time we've had an episode like this. In 1978 we had a near miss. Two people were killed when a Korean airliner was shot at, but most people survived. So the Soviets have this insatiable security need, this requirement, really, to ignore international public opinion, to, and feel free to use military force the way they see fit... HERMAN: That seems to imply you think it was a deliberate act of policy. BURT: Well, bearing in mind that the the Soviet Union has a very centralized system of making military decisions, it is very hard to escape that notion.

GWERTZMAN: At the same time the secretary will be meeting with Mr. Gromyko, Mr. Nitze will be resuming the arms control talks on medium-range missiles in Geneva. Is there any likelihood at all of any progress in these talks before the NATO countries go ahead with the deployment of the new missiles in December, and does Mr. Nitze have any

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new instructions to pass on to the Soviets? BURT: Well, we hope that progress will be made in those negotiations. Nobody wants to deploy an additional 572 nuclear weapons in Europe. But the Soviet Union, beginning in the mid-1970s, launched an unprovoked nuclear buildup aimed at our allies. And we have told the Soviet Union that unless we have an agreement by the end of the year we will begin deploying comparable systems. We haven't ruled out the possibility for an agreement by the end of the year. One reason we think that, we hope that progress will be made is that very clear message to the Soviets that without an agreement, we will start deployment. As the president and Ambassador Nitze made very clear yesterday, Mr. Nitze will go back, open, flexible, ready to listen to Soviet proposals, and ready for our part to negotiate an agreement providing for equal levels of warheads for both sides.

GWERTZMAN: Can he go beyond the previous stated position that we would negotiate equal positions? In other words, there's been some speculation about the Americans now being willing to perhaps cut the number of Pershing-IIs that would be emplaced in Germany. BURT: Well, what we are doing is reviewing our current position. We have a position in place. We think it's a fair position. We think it's one that the Soviet Union can accept. But Ambassador Nitze does have the power to explore alternatives that the Soviets might suggest.

HERMAN: Can you characterize the situation as progress being made, slow but steady? Will this incident slow it, perhaps? BURT: Well, we hope it doesn't. As I said before, it's cast a shadow over the relationship. But we think arms control is important. The Soviet Union has said that it is a peace loving country and has waged a peace offensive in Europe, and we think that the recent episode stands in fairly stark contrast with Soviet claims. We think that the United States and the alliance as a whole, in fact, are peace loving countries, and our arms control positions in Geneva are designed to reflect this.

HERMAN: You know, a moment ago I asked you a question about do the Russians know they've been hurt. That was a premise that you may not agree with. Have the Russians been hurt in the European countries that come within your field? BURT: I think the Russians have been hurt, and I think we focus sometimes too much on what our response should be, what our reaction should be. The important thing is that they have isolated themselves in the international system. This is a setback for the Soviet Union.

HERMAN: Just one other thing, Mr. Secretary, before I yield to my colleagues. Our White House correspondents tell us the president is going to address the nation tomorrow night. What kind of action, what kind of speech do you imagine this will be? BURT: I think it will be a strong, firm speech. He will want to talk about what steps we are prepared to take together with our allies. But more importantly, I think he will want to describe our overall approach to the Soviet Union.

SCHIEFFER: What really are his options now? We're going ahead with the talks in Geneva; Mr. Shultz is going ahead with his meeting with Mr. Gromyko; there's every indication that the grain agreement is not going to be cancelled; obviously we're not going to declare war on the Soviet Union; we're not going to break diplomatic relations. What really is there left for the United States and the Western allies to do besides condemn this act? BURT: Well, I don't want to preempt the president, but there are measures that we can take in our bilateral relationship, bearing in mind already that because of Afghanistan and Poland we have already responded to Soviet aggression. But more importantly, there are international measures. And I

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think Larry Speakes said recently that the area of international civil aviation is one possible area where the international community could demonstrate its outrage. 6.

SCHIEFFER: This would be something like boycotting Soviet airliners, not allowing them to land in Western... BURT: I don't, I don't want to get into details. The important thing is that this response be widespread, that we consult closely with our allies and others so that the international community takes action, not simply the United States.

SCHIEFFER: We have obviously taken the line this far, the government, that it is best to keep talking to the Soviets, even though we condemn this action. But how far does that go? Should the president, should we be interested in having a summit conference next year with Mr. Andropov? There has been some suggestion that that would be a good idea when all this happened. BURT: We can't, we can't answer the question of the summit in abstract. The president's position on this has stayed the same. We are prepared to have such a meeting if it's carefully prepared and the work has been done, and more importantly we have the opportunity to achieve real results in such a summit.

SCHIEFFER: We're still prepared to do that if the meeting is properly... BURT: If it can accomplish something.

GWERTZMAN: Have you had much indication from the allies that in fact they are interested or want concerted action on the international aviation front? BURT: What's clear is that international public opinion is very similar to the American public's reaction. People, people are outraged at this, and we've only begun consultations with other governments. But we certainly hope and expect those governments will be prepared to join us in any actions that we would plan to take.

HERMAN: You mentioned the outrage around the world. Is there a possible danger.... This may seem a trifle overblown, but is there a possible danger that the actions that this administration and its allies may seem to find that they can finally take will not be up to the heat and the nature of the rhetoric that we've been hearing, the secretary of state calling this an appalling crime, the president using similar language. If, after all, that it's just a question of stopping to refuse Aeroflot flights, or something of that sort, that doesn't quite match the outrage that you mentioned yourself a moment ago. BURT: Again, I don't want to prejudge what the president will say, what actions we will discuss with our friends. The important point, again, is what the Soviets have done and what the Soviet action itself means for the Soviet standing in the international community. They have set back their position, their cause considerably. Because while they use words to express their hopes for the international community, their deeds stand in very stark contrast.

HERMAN: How does that setback translate into policy or action, or change of votes in one of the European countries? What's likely to happen? Everybody seems to agree that it's a setback, but I don't understand in real terms what kind of a setback? BURT: Well, I think we'll have to see in the weeks and months ahead. But I think it's very difficult to believe that the Soviet Union is going to be very credible in the disarmament area and other areas in talking about peace when it's so very clear that its primary instrument is military power.

GWERTZMAN: If I could ask a question about another country, have any of the results of the post-July events in Poland led the administration to think it'd be worthwhile to think about relaxing some of the sanctions? BURT: Well, we are monitoring the situation the, the Polish government has set, that they are going to release the vast

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majority of political prisoners. And we have said that we would be prepared to respond to that. We're now monitoring, again, that situation to see if in fact they have released the vast majority of them. We haven't reached a conclusion yet.

HERMAN: Is there any carryover? I mean, would it look awkward to release sanctions against the Polish government in the light of the Korean airplane? BURT: Well, our sanctions against Poland are really based on the Polish situation. Our fundamental objective there is to restore the situation that existed before the imposition of martial law. HERMAN: Is there any way that this Korean plane incident can help the United States, say, in getting its missiles into Europe despite the objections of the opponents in European countries? BURT: Well, we would hope that this would have a sobering impact on people's attitudes about the United States and the Soviet Union. There is an easy tendency for people to compare the two superpowers, to say that they're both military mighty countries that are trying to suppress others. I think this episode makes very clear that there is a big and important difference between the United States and the Soviet Union.

HERMAN: Well, it may to us, but do you see signs yet that it is making any difference in some of the opposition parties in the European countries, in West Germany? BURT: The press reviews we've seen have been very strong. I think that both left-wing and conservative parties in Europe are outraged by this action. It's very hard to find anyone who can justify what the Soviet Union has done.

HERMAN: Thank you very much, Secretary Burt, for being our guest today on Face the Nation.